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In the Claims

1. (Cancelled.)

2. (Cancelled.)

3. (Cancelled.)

4. (Cancelled.)

5. (Cancelled.)

6. (Cancelled.)

7. (Cancelled.)

8. (Cancelled.)

9. (Cancelled.)

10. (Cancelled.)

11. (Cancelled.)

12. (Cancelled.)

13. (Cancelled.)

14. (Cancelled.)

15. (Cancelled.)

16. (Cancelled.)

17. (Cancelled.)

18. (Cancelled.)

19. (Currently amended.)

In a A method ~~of performing a completion or workover operation~~ for thickening a brine during the recovery of an oil or and/or gas well using a thickened brine in order to alleviate fluid loss into the from a subterranean formation, formation in order to alleviate loss of brine into the formation which comprises the improvement comprising introducing into the well a to the brine to be thickened with a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous salt solution, wherein the aqueous salt solution contains 40 weight percent or more of alkali formate and further wherein no more than 25% of the alkali formate is sodium formate, the remainder being potassium formate, cesium formate or a mixture thereof thereof, wherein the amount of suspension added to the brine is that sufficient to alleviate the loss of brine into the subterranean formation.

20. (Cancelled.)

21. (Cancelled.)

22. (Cancelled.)
23. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 19, where the cellulosic polymer is crosslinked with glyoxal.
24. (Cancelled.)
25. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 19, wherein the brine, prior to being thickened with the suspension, has a density greater than 11.6 ppg.
26. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 25, wherein the brine, prior to being thickened with the suspension, has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.
27. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 19, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of anionic and nonionic modified cellulose.
28. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 27, wherein the anionic or nonionic modified cellulose is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.
29. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 19, wherein the suspension further comprises a suspension stabilizer.
30. (Currently amended.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from ~~of alleviating the loss of fluid to~~ a subterranean formation in order to alleviate the loss of brine into the formation during a workover or completion operation which comprises ~~pumping a thickened~~ introducing to the brine to the location where the workover or completion operation is being conducted, the be thickened brine comprising a suspension comprising of a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous alkali formate ~~solution~~ solution, wherein the amount of suspension added to the brine is that sufficient to alleviate the loss of brine into the subterranean formation.
31. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is greater than 40 weight percent.
32. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is between from about 40 to about 75 weight percent.
33. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.
34. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 33, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

35. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of anionic and nonionic modified cellulose.

36. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 35, wherein the anionic or nonionic modified cellulose is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

37. (Cancelled.)

38. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 19, wherein the brine to be thickened is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

39. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

40. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the amount of cellulosic polymer in the suspension is between from about 10 to about 23 weight percent.

41. (Cancelled.)

42. (Cancelled.)

43. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 41 57, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is between from about 40 to about 75 weight percent.

44. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 41 58, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

45. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 44, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

46. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 41 57, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of anionic and nonionic modified cellulose.

47. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 41 57, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

48. (Cancelled.)

49. (Cancelled.)

50. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 49 57, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

51. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 48 58, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

52. (Currently amended.) The method of Claim 48 58, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

53. (Cancelled.)

54. (Cancelled.)

55. (Cancelled.)

56. (Cancelled.)

57. (New.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation in order to alleviate loss of brine into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous salt solution, wherein the aqueous salt solution contains 40 weight percent or more of alkali formate and further wherein no more than 25% of the alkali formate is sodium formate, the remainder being potassium formate, cesium formate or a mixture, wherein the density of the brine to be thickened is greater than 11.6 ppg.

58. (New.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation in order to alleviate loss of brine into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous salt solution, wherein the aqueous salt solution contains 40 weight percent or more of alkali formate and further wherein no more than 25% of the alkali formate is sodium formate, the remainder being potassium formate, cesium formate or a mixture, wherein the density of the aqueous salt solution is greater than the density of the cellulosic polymer.

59. (New.) The method of Claim 19, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

60. (New.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

61. (New.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

62. (New.) The method of Claim 58, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

63. (New.) The method of Claim 28, wherein the anionic or nonionic modified cellulose is crosslinked hydroxyethylcellulose.

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